

IN THE CLAIMS

1. A network print system comprising:

a computer terminal having,

a processor,

a computer user interface, and

a computer display, said processor being configured to produce a print request message in response to information provided through said computer user interface, said print request message containing image data, and said print request message not uniquely identifying a device for printing said image data;

a plurality of printers communicatively coupled to said computer terminal, said plurality of printers each having a printer user interface with a data input device and a data display device; and

a host computer communicatively coupled to said plurality of printers and said computer terminal and configured to receive said print request message, said host computer having

a memory in which said image data is stored, and

a host computer processor configured to produce a job number associated with said print request message and send said job number to said computer terminal, wherein

said computer terminal being configured to display on said computer display an indication of said job number provided by said host computer,

said host computer processor being configured to recognize when said job number is input to a particular printer of said plurality of printers via said printer user interface and configured to, based on said job number input, associate said particular printer with said print

request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and provide said image data to said identified particular printer for printing so that a user can input said job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the image data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

2. A network print system comprising:

a computer terminal having,

a processor,

a computer user interface configured to receive a password entered by a user, and

a computer display, said processor being configured to produce a print request message containing image data and said password, said print request message not uniquely identifying a device for printing said image data;

a plurality of printers communicatively coupled to said computer terminal, said plurality of printers each having a printer user interface with a data input device and a data display device; and

a host computer communicatively coupled to said plurality of printers and said computer terminal, and configured to receive said print request message, said host computer having

a memory in which said image data and said password are stored, and

a host computer processor configured to produce a job number associated with said print request message, store said job number in said memory in association with said image data and said password, and send said job number to said computer terminal, wherein

said computer terminal being configured to display on said computer display an indication of said job number provided by said host computer, and

said host computer processor being configured to recognize when said job number and said password are input to a particular printer of said plurality of printers via said printer user interface and configured to, based on said job number input, associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message and provide said image data to said identified particular printer for printing so that the user can input said job number and said password into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the image data at the printer into which the user input the job number and said password.

3. A network print system comprising:

a computer terminal having,

a processor,

a computer user interface, and

a computer display, said processor being configured to produce a print request message containing image data, said print request message not uniquely identifying a device for printing said image data;

a plurality of printers coupled to said computer terminal, each printer having a printer user interface with a data input device and a data display device, and

a printer memory configured to hold a user password,

a host computer coupled to said plurality of printers and said computer terminal, and configured to receive said print request message, said host computer having

a host computer memory in which said image data is stored, and

a host computer processor configured to produce a job number associated with said print request message, store said job number in said host computer memory in association with said image data, and send said job number to said computer terminal, wherein

said computer terminal being configured to display on said computer display an indication of said job number provided by said host computer,

at least one of said host computer and said plurality of printers being configured to determine if an input data input through said printer user interface of a particular printer of said plurality of printers matches said job number, and if so, to associate said particular printer with said print request message, identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message and provide said image data to said particular printer,

each of said plurality of printers being configured to determine whether a password input via said printer user interface matches said password stored in said printer memory and if so printing a document corresponding to said image data so that a user can input said input data and a password into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the image data at the printer into which the user input the input data and the password.

4. A secure method for printing a document in a network print system having a plurality of printers, comprising the steps of:

receiving an image data at a first network terminal;

producing a print request message at said first network terminal and sending said print request message and said image data to a second network terminal, said print request message not uniquely identifying a device for printing said image data;

storing in memory said image data and an associated job number at said second network terminal;

sending a reply message to said first network terminal from said second network terminal, said reply message including said associated job number;

displaying said associated job number at said first network terminal;

receiving a local print request message at said second network terminal from a particular printer of said plurality of printers, said local request message having an input job number; and

comparing said input job number with said associated job number and if said input job number matches said associated job number, associating said particular printer with said print request message and identifying the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and printing from said identified particular printer a document corresponding to said image data so that a user can input said input job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the image data at the printer into which the user input the input job number.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein:

the storing step includes storing said image data and said associated job number at a host computer, said second network terminal comprising said host computer and at least one printer, said at least one printer having a printer user interface;

the step of receiving the local print request message at the second network terminal includes inputting the input job number on the printer user interface of any one of said at least one printer; and

the comparing step includes comparing at the host computer the input job number with the associated job number.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein:

said receiving an image data step includes receiving a password;

the producing a print request message step includes sending the password;

the storing step includes storing said password;

the step of receiving a local print request message includes receiving an input password; and

the comparing step includes comparing the password with the input password and printing the image data if said input password matches said password.

7. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

storing an assigned password at the second network terminal;

inputting a local password at any one of said plurality of printers; and

comparing the local password with the assigned password, wherein

said step of printing from said any one of said plurality of printers comprises printing said document only if said local password matches said assigned password.

8. A secure network print system having a plurality of printers, comprising:

means for receiving an image data at a first network terminal;

means for producing a print request message not uniquely identifying a device for printing said image data at said first network terminal and for sending said print request message and said image data to a second network terminal;

means for storing in memory said image data and an associated job number at said second network terminal;

means for sending a reply message to said first network terminal from said second network terminal, said reply message including said associated job number;

means for displaying said associated job number at said first network terminal;

means for inputting a local print request message at a particular printer of said plurality of printers, said local print request message having an input job number;

means for sending said local print request message to said second network terminal;  
and

means for comparing said input job number with said associated job number and if said input job number matches said associated job number associating said particular printer with said print request message and identifying the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and printing from said identified particular printer a document corresponding to said image data so that a user can input said input job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the image data at the printer into which the user input the input job number.

9. (New) A network host computer, comprising:

an interface unit configured to communicatively couple the network host computer to a computer terminal and a plurality of network printers, said interface unit being configured

to receive a print request message from said computer terminal, said print request message including print data and not uniquely identifying a printer for printing the print data;

a memory configured to store said print data; and

a processor configured to:

produce a job number associated with the print request message received from the computer terminal,

recognize that said job number has been input to a particular one of said plurality of printers,

associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and

provide said print data to said identified particular printer for printing, wherein a user can input said job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

10. (New) The network host computer of Claim 9, wherein said interface unit is further configured to receive at least one of image data and text data as said print data from said computer terminal.

11. (New) The network host computer of Claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to send said job number to the computer terminal so that the job number can be displayed on the computer terminal.

12. (New) The network host computer of Claim 9, wherein



said memory is configured to store said job number, and  
said processor is configured to associate said particular printer with said print request  
message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request  
message by verifying that the job number input to said particular printer matches said job  
number stored in said memory.

13. (New) The network host computer of Claim 12, wherein said processor is further  
configured to perform a secondary verification if said job number input to said particular  
printer does not match said job number stored in said memory.

14. (New) The network host computer of Claim 13, wherein said processor is further  
configured to send an error message to said printer when a job number input to said particular  
printer as part of said secondary verification does not match said job number stored in said  
memory.

15. (New) The network host computer of Claim 9, wherein said interface unit is  
further configured to receive a password from said computer terminal.

16. (New) The network host computer of Claim 15, wherein said processor is further  
configured to send said job number and password to the computer terminal so that the job  
number and password can be displayed on the computer terminal.

17. (New) The network host computer of Claim 15, wherein said processor is further configured to:

associate said job number with said password and print request message received from the computer terminal;

recognize that said job number and password has been input to a particular one of said plurality of printers;

associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message; and

provide said print data to said identified particular printer for printing, wherein a user can input said job number and password into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

18. (New) The network host computer of Claim 15, wherein  
said memory is configured to store said job number and password, and  
said processor is configured to associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message by verifying that the job number and password input to said particular printer matches said job number and password stored in said memory.

19. (New) The network host computer of Claim 18, wherein said processor is further configured to perform a secondary verification if said job number or and password input to said particular printer does not match said job number stored in said memory.

20. (New) The network host computer of Claim 19, wherein said processor is further configured to send an error message to said printer when a job number and password input to said particular printer as part of said secondary verification does not match said job number and password stored in said memory.

21. (New) A network computer terminal comprising:  
an interface unit configured to communicatively couple the network computer terminal to a host computer and a plurality of network printers;  
a computer user interface configured to input information into said network computer terminal;  
a processor configured to:  
produce a print request message in response to information provided through said computer user interface, said print request message containing print data and not uniquely identifying a device for printing said print data,  
send said print request message to said host computer via said interface unit, and  
receive a job number produced by the host computer and associated with said print request message; and  
a computer display configured to display an indication of said job number, wherein said host computer recognizes when said job number is input to a particular printer of said plurality of printers and, based on said job number input, associates said particular printer with said print request message and identifies the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and provides said print data to said identified particular printer for

printing so that a user can input said job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

22. (New) The network computer terminal of Claim 21, wherein said interface unit comprises a video and command data interface unit.

23. (Amended) The network computer terminal of Claim 21, wherein said processor is configured to produce a print request message including at least one of image data and text data.

24. (New) The network computer terminal of Claim 21, wherein said processor is further configured to input a password in response to information provided through said computer user interface.

25. (New) The network computer terminal of Claim 24 wherein said processor is further configured to:  
send said password and print request message to said host computer via said interface unit,

receive a job number produced by the host computer and associated with said password and print request message; and

said computer display is further configured to display an indication of said job number and password, wherein said host computer recognizes when said job number and password is input to a particular printer of said plurality of printers and, based on said job number and

password input, associates said particular printer with said print request message and identifies the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and provides said print data to said identified particular printer for printing so that a user can input said job number and password into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number and password.

26. (New) A network printer comprising:  
an interface unit configured to communicatively couple the network printer to a computer terminal, a host computer and a plurality of other network printers;  
a printer user interface having a data input device and a data display device,  
a processor configured to:  
receive a job number input through said printer user interface, the job number previously associated with a print request message by the host computer, the print request message being sent by the computer terminal and having print data but not uniquely identifying a device for printing said print data,  
send said job number to said host computer, which identifies the printer that sent the job number as the printer to receive the print request message and provides the print data to the identified printer; and  
a print mechanism configured to print said print data, wherein a user can input said job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

27. (New) The network printer of Claim 26, wherein said interface unit comprises a video and command data interface unit.

28. (New) The network printer of Claim 26, wherein said print data comprises at least one of image data and text data.

29. (New) The network printer of Claim 26, wherein said processor is configured to send a request to the host computer requesting that the job number be verified by the host computer.

30. (New) The network printer of Claim 26, wherein said processor is further configured to:

receive a password and a job number input through said printer user interface, the password and job number previously associated with said print request message by the host computer; and

send said password and job number to said host computer, which identifies the printer that sent the password and job number as the printer to receive the print request message and provides the print data to the identified printer, wherein a user can input said password and job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the password and job number.

31. (New) A network print server configured to connect to a plurality of printers, comprising:

an interface unit configured to communicatively couple the network print server to a host computer, that is connected to a computer terminal, said interface unit being configured to:

receive a print request message from said computer terminal via said host computer, said print request message including print data and not uniquely identifying a printer for printing the print data, and

receive a job number produced by the host computer and associated with the print request message received from the computer terminal; and

a processor configured to:

recognize that said job number has been input to a particular one of said plurality of printers,

associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message, and

provide said print data to said identified particular printer for printing, wherein a user can input said job number into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

32. (New) The network print server of Claim 31, wherein said print data comprises at least one of image data and text data.

33. (New) The network print server of Claim 31, wherein said interface unit is further configured to receive a password from said computer terminal via said host computer.

34. (New) The network print server of Claim 33, wherein said processor is further configured to:

associate said job number with said password and print request message received from the computer terminal;

recognize that said job number and password has been input to a particular one of said plurality of printers;

associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message; and

provide said print data to said identified particular printer for printing, wherein a user can input said job number and password into any one of the plurality of printers in order to print the print data at the printer into which the user input the job number.

35. (New) The network print server of Claim 33, further comprising a memory configured to store said job number and password, wherein said processor is configured to associate said particular printer with said print request message and identify the particular printer as the printer for receiving the print request message by verifying that the job number and password input to said particular printer matches said job number and password stored in said memory.